

summer reading

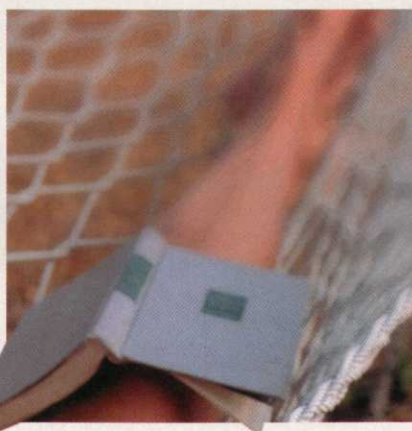
Back before kids and a real job, I spent nearly every afternoon in my huge back yard, reposed on a hammock, sipping a glass of lemonade and flipping the friendly pages of books. While demands for wrestling, dinosaur parties and sidewalk chalk now dominate most of the daylight hours, evenings do bring a few spare moments to enjoy the simple pleasure of reading.

For those who argue they don't have the time, my response remains simple: turn off the television and feed yourself with the nourishment of your noggin. In no particular order, we proudly present a long-overdue guide to summer reading:

***The Theory and Practice of Gamesmanship: Or The Art of Winning Games Without Actually Cheating* – By Stephen Potter.** This short gem provides all the information you ever need to perfect the fine art of upstaging your friends and enemies. With tongue firmly in cheek, Potter covers the gambits and ploys necessary to succeed at being the best.

***The Quiet American* – By Graham Greene.** A book about the first days of Vietnam in which an opium-addled detached British reporter contends with a naïve American agent working for democracy. Of course, a young girl is the center of their conflict.

***Rendezvous in Black* – By Cornell Woolrich.** A nasty little noir story steeped



HERE'S A NOVEL IDEA: BEAT
THE DOG DAYS BY CRACKING
OPEN A GOOD BOOK

BY MARK LUCE

in revenge and written by a forgotten master of the thriller.

***The Pitch That Killed* – By Mike Sowell.** On April 16, 1920, Cleveland Indians shortstop Ray Chapman was beamed in the head by Yankees pitcher Carl Mays. Chapman died the next day. Sowell's outstanding book tells the story of both men and of the thrilling pennant race that followed Chapman's death.

***Motherless Brooklyn* – By Jonathan Lethem.** Lionel Essrog, a young man called "Freakshow" because of his

Tourette's syndrome, turns detective as he tries to find his boss' killers. A funny and touching novel from one of America's finest young writers.

***Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* – By Malcolm Gladwell.** An intriguing look at how our first impressions of a situation often bring better decisions than hemming and hawing over them. Extremely entertaining with plenty of jaw-droppers from this fabulous New Yorker writer.

***Captain Blood* – By Rafael Sabatini.** Adventure lovers will be mesmerized by this swashbuckling 1922 classic, in which a English gentleman, Peter Blood, transforms into a pirate with a conscience.

***Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson* – By Geoffrey Ward.** In Ward's able hands, the first black heavyweight champion comes to extraordinary life. Johnson was a complicated man and battled racism every bit as strong as the opponents he routinely pummelled.

***No Country for Old Men* – By Cormac McCarthy.** For 200 pages, this novel from the author of "All The Pretty Horses," is one fascinating, blood-soaked chase. The last 60 pages address questions of loyalty, cowardice and a world gone mad. Unbelievably good and raw.

Enjoy the hammock.

Mark Luce lives in Kansas City, Mo., where he's a sucker for hard-boiled detective novels.

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